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DE RUEBLK #5433/1 1998625  
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R 103525Z JUL 79  
FM AMEMBASSY KABUL  
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC 4753  
INFO RUGMGR/AMEMBASSY ANKARA 3663  
RUMJPG/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 621  
RUSBD/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 9021  
RUCRA/AMEMBASSY JIDDA 339  
RUDTC/AMEMBASSY LONDON 1683  
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 1743  
RUSBAE/AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI 7875  
RUFNPE/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3152  
RUCMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 324  
RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO 15  
RUHCHQA/CINCPAC  
RUSNAAA/CINCEUR

BT  
C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 3 KABUL 5433

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR POLAD  
CINCEUR: ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 12865: GDS 7-17-85 (TAYLOR, JAMES E.) OR-P  
TAGS: PEPR, PINS, PINT, AF, UR  
SUBJECT: (LOU) SOVIET EFFORT TO URGE DRA TO FIND A POLITICAL  
RESOLUTION OF DOMESTIC CONFLICT MAY BE UNDERWAY

REF: (A) KABUL 5092; (B) KABUL 5088; (C) KABUL 5116;  
(D) KABUL 5288; (E) KABUL 5362; (F) KABUL 4695 (ALL NOTAL)

1. (C - ENTIRE TEXT.)

2. SUMMARY: A NUMBER OF RECENT DEVELOPMENTS IN AFGHANISTAN  
SUGGEST THAT A SOVIET CAMPAIGN MAY BE UNDERWAY IN KABUL,  
AIMED AT "HELPING" THE EMBATTLED DRA LEADERSHIP FIND A POLI-  
TICAL, RATHER THAN STRICTLY MILITARY, MEANS TO COUNTER THE  
GROWTH OF DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN OPPOSITION. STEPS TAKEN SO  
FAR, WHILE PERHAPS BUYING THE REGIME AND MOSCOW  
SOME BREATHING SPACE, ARE PROBABLY INSUFFICIENT IN THEMSELVES  
TO GUARANTEE THE FUTURE OF THE REVOLUTION, AND CONSIDERABLY  
MORE SUBSTANTIVE CHANGES WILL PROBABLY BE NECESSARY. OPTIONS  
ALONG THESE LINES ARE FEW, HOWEVER, AND THE "VOLUNTARY" DE-  
PARTURE OF ONE OR MORE MEMBERS OF THE TOP DRA LEADERSHIP  
MAY BE MANDATORY IF MOSCOW WANTS TO AVOID FACING A DRA SOS  
FOR DIRECT MILITARY INTERVENTION IN ORDER TO HELP THE  
KHALQIS STAY AFLOAT. WE ARE NOT CERTAIN THAT SOVIET "ADVICE"  
WILL BE HEEDED BY THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP, AND MUCH MAY  
DEPEND ON THE PERSONAL DIPLOMACY OF  
VASILY SAFRONCHUK, THE RECENTLY ARRIVED  
"TROUBLESHOOTER" AND SENIOR DIPLOMAT WHO COULD WELL HAVE BEEN  
CHARGED WITH SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR FINDING A VIABLE EXIT  
FROM THE CURRENT MAZE. PITFALLS AND UNKNOWN REMAIN NUM-  
EROUS, BUT CONTINUED SOVIET ASSURANCES TO THE AFGHAN "PEO-  
PLE," AND RECENT INDICATIONS OF INCREASED SOVIET INVOLVE-  
MENT IN THE MILITARY FIELD HERE, SUGGEST THAT A SOVIET  
"GUARANTEE" OF THE REVOLUTION MAY BE THE INDUCEMENT OFFERED THE  
KHALQIS IN RETURN FOR THE SACRIFICES WHICH MAY BE NECESSARY  
TO REVERSE THE TIDE OF CURRENT EVENTS. END OF SUMMARY.

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3. A SEARCH FOR A POLITICAL RESOLUTION OF DOMESTIC PROBLEMS MAY BE UNDERWAY: OVER THE PAST FEW WEEKS THERE HAVE BEEN A NUMBER OF DEVELOPMENTS WHICH SUGGEST THAT THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, PROBABLY AT SOVIET URGING, MAY BE SEEKING A POLITICAL RATHER THAN STRICTLY MILITARY, MEANS TO COUNTER ITS DOMESTIC OPPOSITION. THE REGIME HAS BOLDLY, ALBEIT PERHAPS DISINGENUOUSLY, DECLARED ITS LAND REFORM PROGRAM "SUCCESSFULLY COMPLETED" (REF A), THEREBY AT LEAST AVOIDING THE CREATION OF FURTHER OPPOSITION ALONG THE LINES THAT PARTICULAR REFORM MEASURE APPARENTLY HAS PROMPTED SINCE ITS INCEPTION. LIKEWISE, ACCORDING TO RECENT HINTS BY PRIME MINISTER AMIN, THE DRA'S LITERACY CAMPAIGN, WHICH HAS PROVOKED HOSTILITY IN THIS EXTREMELY CONSERVATIVE SOCIETY BECAUSE MOST AFGHANS DO NOT WISH TO SEE THEIR FEMALES EDUCATED EVEN TO RUDIMENTARY LEVELS, OR "EXPOSED" TO MALE TEACHERS, MAY SOON BE DECLARED A "SUCCESS." A DRA ANNOUNCEMENT ON JULY 11 PROMULGATING SEVERAL "CONCESSIONS" TO THE PRIVATE SECTOR OF THE ECONOMY REPRESENTED, INTER ALIA, ANOTHER ATTEMPT TO MOLLIFY ANY OPPOSITION STEMMING FROM FEAR OF THIS REGIME'S FUTURE ECONOMIC POLICIES. THUS, THE GOVERNMENT APPARENTLY HAS BEGUN TO DISTANCE ITSELF FROM A NUMBER OF ITS MORE AMBITIOUS AND GRATING REFORMS, NOT NECESSARILY BECAUSE THEY WERE ILL-CONCEIVED, OR UNNECESSARY, BUT PERHAPS BECAUSE THEY WERE OVERZEALOUSLY INITIATED -- AND AROUSED SERIOUS RESISTANCE.

4. REPORTS OF "NEGOTIATIONS" AMONG THE REGIME, THE SOVIETS, AND SEVERAL LEADERS OF FORMER GOVERNMENTS WOULD ALSO POINT TO AN EFFORT TO ESTABLISH SOME SORT OF "NATIONAL FRONT" (REF B). COMMENTS BY USUALLY WELL-INFORMED EASTERN EUROPEAN AND SOVIET DIPLOMATS HERE LEND A CERTAIN CREDENCE TO THIS PARTICULAR THESIS (REF C). IN THIS CONNECTION, THE REPORTED RELEASE FROM PRISON OF PARCHAMISTS (REF D), AND THAT GROUP'S SUBSEQUENT PRINTING AND WIDESPREAD DISTRIBUTION OF "UNDERGROUND" LETTERS (REF E) ATTACKING, INTER ALIA, AMIN AND OTHER ELEMENTS OF THE REGIME, REINFORCE THE CONTENTION THAT CERTAIN FORCES ARE WORKING TO PROVIDE SOME FORM OF LEADERSHIP AND PARTY MORE BROADLY BASED THAN THE PEOPLES' DEMOCRATIC PARTY OF AFGHANISTAN (PDPA).

5. ON THE FOREIGN POLICY FRONT AS WELL SOME SIGNS HAVE BEEN DETECTED THAT SUGGEST A DEVELOPING PROGRAM TO AVOID OR DRAW BACK SELECTIVELY FROM CONFRONTATION. THE EARLY JULY VISIT TO ISLAMABAD BY DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER DOST HAS BEEN THE MOST IMPORTANT DEVELOPMENT ALONG THESE LINES, ESPECIALLY SINCE THERE HAS BEEN RECENTLY A SLIGHT MODERATION IN THIS GOVERNMENT'S ANTI-ST

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RUFNPS/AMEMBASSY PARIS 3153  
RUGMHR/AMEMBASSY TEHRAN 325  
RUFHNA/USMISSION USNATO 16  
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 3 KABUL 5433

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR POLAD  
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E.O. 12065: GDS 7-17-75 (TAYLOR, JAMES E.) OR-P

PAKISTAN PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN. MOREOVER, WE HAVE BEEN TOSED A FEW MINOR OLIVE-TWIGS LATELY -- RELATIVELY HIGH-LEVEL ATTENDANCE AT OUR JULY 4 RECEPTION, A FIRST-EVER MEETING, AT AFGHAN INITIATIVE, BETWEEN AMIN AND A VISITING USICA LECTURER -- WHICH COULD INDICATE THAT THE DRA MAY BE INTERESTED IN LIFTING OUR BILATERAL RELATIONSHIP FROM THE NADIR IT HAS REACHED IN RECENT MONTHS.

6. HIGH-LEVEL SOVIET DIPLOMAT COULD BE THE RASPUTIN BEHIND THESE DEVELOPMENTS: ALL OF THESE SIGNS HAVE EMERGED SINCE THE EARLY JUNE ARRIVAL IN KABUL OF SOVIET DIPLOMAT VASILY SAFRONCHUK, FORMER AMBASSADOR TO GHANA, FORMER DEPUTY PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE AT THE UNITED NATIONS, AND A CAREER DIPLOMAT WITH APPARENTLY SOLID POLITICAL CONNECTIONS, WHO IS OBVIOUSLY OVER-QUALIFIED TO SERVE AS THE THIRD-RANKING MAN IN THE SOVIET EMBASSY IN KABUL (HIS PROTOCOL RANK WHICH NO ONE HERE BELIEVES). PRIOR TO HIS ARRIVAL, STORIES CIRCULATED IN KABUL AND IN MOSCOW THAT SAFRONCHUK WOULD SERVE AS SOME SORT OF "ADVISOR" TO THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF THE AFGHAN GOVERNMENT, STORIES WHICH MAY HAVE BEEN BORNE OUT BY SUBSEQUENT EVENTS. GIVEN SAFRONCHUK'S EXPERIENCE, WE BELIEVE IT SAFE TO CONCLUDE THAT HE MAY HAVE COME TO AFGHANISTAN WITH ORDERS TO TRY AND FIND A POLITICAL, RATHER THAN PURELY MILITARY, RESOLUTION OF THIS COUNTRY'S DOMESTIC STRIFE, PROBABLY MOST IMPORTANTLY IN ORDER TO PRECLUDE A DRA APPEAL FOR DIRECT SOVIET MILITARY HELP IN STAYING AFLOAT. IN THIS CONNECTION, MOST OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT SAFRONCHUK HAS NO NORMAL FUNCTION IN THE SOVIET EMBASSY. ALTHOUGH SOME OF THE SURMISES ABOUT SAFRONCHUK'S MISSION ARE SPECULATION, WE BELIEVE THAT THE SUDDENNESS OF, AND THE PECULIAR CIRCUMSTANCES SURROUNDING, HIS APPOINTMENT, HIS STATUS SINCE HIS ARRIVAL, AND THE POLICY DEVELOPMENTS NOTED ABOVE, CLEARLY INDICATE THAT MOSCOW IS URGING, IF NOT PRESSURING, THE DRA TO TAKE STEPS TO REVERSE THE TIDE OF EVENTS, AND TO PRESERVE THE INTEGRITY OF THE REVOLUTION.

7. LOCAL CONDITIONS WHICH COULD HAVE PROMPTED SOVIET PRESSURE ON THE DRA TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION: THE AFGHAN REGIME'S APPARENT INABILITY -- OR UNWILLINGNESS -- TO UNDERTAKE, ON ITS OWN, STEPS WHICH WOULD STABILIZE THE DETERIORATING SECURITY AND POLITICAL SITUATION IN THE COUNTRYSIDE, OR BROADEN THE GOVERNMENT'S BASE OF SUPPORT, WOULD PROBABLY CONSTITUTE THE GREATEST IMPETUS FOR ANY SOVIET DECISION TO URGE, CAJOLE, OR PRESSURE THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP TO SEEK POLITICAL SOLUTIONS TO ITS PROBLEMS. LIKEWISE, MOSCOW MAY WELL HAVE WANTED TO DEFLECT THE DRA'S WILLINGNESS TO BUILD TENSIONS WITH ITS NEIGHBORS (ESPECIALLY PAKISTAN), A TREND WHICH COULD HAVE LED TO AN AFGHAN APPEAL FOR SOVIET HELP TO COUNTER FOREIGN "AGGRESSION" (REF F). MOREOVER, THE CHILL IN AFGHAN-U.S. RELATIONS, AND THE DRASTIC REDUCTION OF OUR ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ESPECIALLY SINCE THE JULY 13 VOTE BY A SENATE-HOUSE CONFERENCE COMMITTEE TO CUT AID), COULD ALSO HAVE BEEN VIEWED BY THE KREMLIN AS COUNTER TO SOVIET LARGER INTERESTS, SINCE MOSCOW OR ITS SURROGATES WILL PROBABLY HAVE TO TAKE UP THE ASSISTANCE SLACK IF OTHER FREE-WORLD DONORS DEPART FROM THE AID FIELD HERE, AND BECAUSE AND EVEN GREATER PERCEIVED DEPENDENCE BY THE DRA ON THE SOVIETS WOULD PROBABLY EXACERBATE THE DOMESTIC UNREST, RATHER THAN AMELIORATE IT. IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, A CONCERN THAT AN AFGHAN SOS WAS BECOMING MORE AND MORE LIKELY, AS WELL AS "JUSTIFIED" IN TERMS OF THE 1972 BILATERAL TREATY, AT A TIME WHEN MOSCOW HAD LARGER INTERESTS WHICH IT PROBABLY DID NOT WANT TO THREATEN BY FURNISHING A DECISION TO INTERVENE, MAY WELL HAVE SEEN THE BOTTOM-LINE CONSIDERATION IN DISPATCHING SAFRONCHUK ON HIS MISSION TO KABUL.

8. A POLITICAL RESOLUTION WILL PROBABLY REQUIRE MORE "CONCESSIONS" THAN HAVE SURFACED HERETOFORE: BASED ON OUR READING OF WHAT MAKES THE INSURGENTS FIGHT, WE BELIEVE THAT THE DRA LEADERSHIP WILL HAVE TO SWEATEN THE POT CONSIDERABLY MORE BEFORE THE TIDE CAN BE TURNED IN THE COUNTRYSIDE. THE VARIOUS REFORM PROGRAMS DID INDEED CONTRIBUTE A GREAT DEAL TO THE GROWTH OF DOMESTIC HOSTILITY TOWARD THIS REGIME, BUT, NEVERTHELESS, THE OVERWHELMING MOTIVATION FOR MOST AFGHAN PEASANTS WHO HAVE TAKEN UP ARMS HAS BEEN THEIR PERCEPTION THAT THE KHALAIS ARE ATHEISTS, COMMUNISTS, AND SOVIET PUPPETS. TO DISPEL THESE DEEPLY-HELD BELIEFS WILL CLEARLY REQUIRE GREAT SKILL AND SUBSTANTIVE CONCESSIONS WELL EXCEEDING WHAT THE REGIME HAS DONE SO FAR. WHETHER THE SOVIETS AND THE DRA LEADERSHIP CAN COME UP WITH AGREED AND NECESSARY NEXT STEPS REMAINS TO BE SEEN, BUT THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT THEIR TASK IS FORMIDABLE.

9. AVAILABLE OPTIONS ARE NOT PLENTIFUL: IF, IN FACT, THE GROWTH OF THE OPPOSITION HAS NOT BEEN COMPLETELY STUNTED BY THE GOVERNMENT'S REPRESSIVE MOVES SO FAR, THERE STILL ARE NOT MANY MORE STEPS AVAILABLE TO CREATE AN ALTERNATE REGIME WHICH WOULD CARRY ANY GENUINE POSSIBILITY OF TURNING THE TIDE, YET STOP SHORT OF THREATENING THE INTEGRITY OF THE REVOLUTION.

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 C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 3 OF 3 LABUL 5433

CINCPAC: ALSO FOR POLAD  
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E.O. 12065: GDS 7-17-85 (TAYLOR, JAMES E.) OR-P

10. THE MOST PROBABLE, AND PERHAPS THE MOST NECESSARY, WOULD BE A CHANGE IN THE DR'S TOP LEADERSHIP, ENCOMPASSING THE DEPARTURE OF AMIN OR TARA-KI -- OR BOTH. BASED ON SOME INDICATIONS (THE RECENT SPATE OF UNDERGROUND TRACTS, MOST OF WHICH HAVE BITTERLY ATTACKED AMIN), AND ON A GENERAL "FEEL" AMONG VIRTUALLY ALL OUR AFGHAN CONTACTS, TARA-KI IS INCREASINGLY VIEWED AS A FIGUREHEAD WHO SHOULD NOT BE TAKEN SERIOUSLY. THE REAL VILLAIN IS AMIN, WHO IS CONSIDERED RESPONSIBLE FOR, INTER ALIA, THE DR'S OPPRESSIVE POLICIES OF ARREST, TORTURE, AND EXECUTION, AS WELL AS THE DRIVING FORCE BEHIND THE GRATING DOMESTIC REFORM PROGRAMS, AND AFGHANISTAN'S ARDENT EMBRACE OF THE USSR. THEREFORE, ANY SINCERE ATTEMPT TO RECONCILE THE FORCES LOOSE IN AFGHANISTAN THROUGH A LEADERSHIP CHANGE WOULD PROBABLY HAVE TO INCLUDE THE DEPARTURE, OR -- BETTER YET -- THE DEATH OF AMIN (IN THIS LAND OF THE BLOOD FEUD, SOME KHALQI LEADER HAS TO PAY THE TRADITIONAL PRICE FOR THOUSANDS OF DEATHS). WE COULD FORESEE A SCENARIO IN WHICH TARA-KI WOULD REMAIN AS THE POLITICALLY IMPOTENT "GREAT LEADER." IN THIS REGARD, THE CONSTANTLY BUILDING TARA-KI PERSONALITY CULT (SYMBOLIZED MOST RECENTLY BY THE LAVISH CELEBRATIONS SURROUNDING HIS 62ND BIRTHDAY ON JULY 14) SUGGESTS THAT TARA-KI'S DEPARTURE WOULD BE A WRECKING BLOW FOR THE REVOLUTION, AND WOULD BE UNDERTAKEN ONLY AS

A DISPERATE LAST RESORT. INCIDENTALLY, TARAKI IS STILL RESPECTED BY ELEMENTS IN NON-THALQI SEGMENTS OF AFGHAN SOCIETY, PARTICULARLY IN THE RANKS OF THE EDUCATED.

11. THE SALIENT QUESTION, OF COURSE, IS WHETHER THE SOVIETS CARRY SUFFICIENT WEIGHT THAT THEIR "ADVICE" COULD CONVINCE TARAKI AND/OR AMIN TO SACRIFICE HIMSELF FOR THE SAKE OF THE REVOLUTION. EVERYTHING WOULD DEPEND ON HOW SUCH ADVICE WAS COINED. PROBABLY THE MOST VIABLE APPROACH ALONG THESE LINES WOULD BE THE THESIS THAT THE STATE OF AFFAIRS FOR THIS GOVERNMENT HAS REACHED THE POINT THAT THE SHEER EXISTENCE OF THE REVOLUTION MANDATES THE "HONORABLE AND VOLUNTARY" RETIREMENT OF CERTAIN MEMBERS OF THE DRA LEADERSHIP. AT THE SAME TIME, MOSCOW WOULD THEREAFTER "GUARANTEE" THE FUTURE OF THE REVOLUTION THROUGH PLEDGES OF INCREASED MILITARY AND ECONOMIC SUPPORT. RECENT STATEMENTS BY THE SOVIET ELITE PROMISING SUPPORT FOR THE AFGHAN "PEOPLE," AND THE ARRIVAL IN AFGHANISTAN OF DOZENS OF SOVIET HELICOPTER PILOTS, INDICATES THAT MOSCOW IS PROBABLY REASSURING THE DRA LEADERSHIP OF CONTINUED SOVIET BACKING, DESPITE THE SIMULTANEOUS CAMPAIGN TO FIND A POLITICAL SOLUTION.

12. SOVIET MISCALCULATION OR HEAVY-HANDEDNESS, OR A TARAKI-AMIN DECISION THAT THEY TRULY HAVE NO OPTION, BUT TO FORCE AHEAD ALONG CURRENT PATES, COULD VERY POSSIBLY SCOTCH ANY SEARCH FOR A NON-MILITARY APPROACH TO THE INSURGENCY. WE DOUBT THAT THE SOVIETS ARE WILLING OR ABLE TO FORCE THE REMOVAL OF ANY OF THE DRA LEADERSHIP, ALTHOUGH MOSCOW MAY EVENTUALLY DECIDE TO LEND "SUPPORT" TO ANY ELEMENTS WHICH DISPLAY AN INCLINATION TO SETTLE THE CONFLICT SHORT OF AN APPEAL FOR DIRECT SOVIET MILITARY HELP. THIS COULD INCLUDE A COUP D'ETAT BY THE AFGHAN MILITARY.

13. INTRANSIGENCE ON THE PART OF TARAKI AND AMIN, OR AN ABORTED SOVIET CAMPAIGN WHICH MAY NOW BE UNDERWAY, WOULD PROBABLY SIGNAL "MORE OF THE SAME" FROM THE DRA, A STANCE WHICH WOULD LEAD TO FURTHER CONFLICT, BLOODSHED, AND INSTABILITY. THIS LOWERED THRESHOLD OF VIOLENCE WOULD, OF COURSE, CARRY SERIOUS SECURITY IMPLICATIONS FOR FOREIGNERS STATIONED IN THIS COUNTRY.

14. CONCLUSIONS: WE MAY BE IN THE MIDST OF A SOVIET ATTEMPT TO NUDGE OR PUSE AFGHAN POLICIES IN DIRECTIONS WHICH WOULD REVERSE THE GROWTH OF DOMESTIC OPPOSITION, AND DEFUSE DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN HOSTILITY TO THIS REGIME, SO THAT, IN THE LAST ANALYSIS, MOSCOW WILL NOT HAVE TO FACE AN AFGHAN APPEAL FOR DIRECT MILITARY HELP. AT THE SAME TIME, STATEMENTS BY THE SOVIET ELITE AND INDICATIONS OF INCREASED SOVIET MILITARY INVOLVEMENT SUGGEST A

PARALLEL POLICY AIMED AT INSURING THE FUTURE OF THE REVOLU-  
TION, ALTHOUGH PERHAPS WITHOUT THE PRESENT COMPOSITION OF  
THE AFGHAN LEADERSHIP.

15. SAFRONCHIK COULD BE THE LOCAL BEHIND-THE-SCENES DIRECTOR  
OF THIS PARTICULAR DRAMA, BUT THE PROBLEMS AND PITFALLS CON-  
FRONTING HIM AND THE DEA LEADERSHIP ARE FORMIDABLE, AND THE  
UNKNOWN REMAINING IN THE EQUATION ARE STILL NUMEROUS. AMSIUTZ  
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